

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method to communicate to an occupant of a vehicle information relating to a location of the vehicle in the absence of predetermined route information, the method comprising:
 - determining the location of the vehicle;
 - determining a heading vector associated with the vehicle;
 - identifying a point of interest as a function of the location of the vehicle and the heading vector associated with the vehicle; and
 - communicating the point of interest to the occupant of the vehicle.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein communicating the point of interest to the occupant of the vehicle comprises displaying a graphic representation of the point of interest and a graphic representation of the vehicle using a display device.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein communicating the point of interest to the occupant of the vehicle comprises generating an audible indicator of the point of interest using an audio device.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the location of the vehicle comprises identifying a street on which the vehicle is located.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the point of interest is an intersection, and further comprising identifying the intersection as a function of the location of the vehicle, the heading vector associated with the vehicle, and a list of intersections along the street.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - identifying a plurality of points of interest as a function of the location of the vehicle and the heading vector associated with the vehicle; and
 - communicating at least one of the points of interest to the occupant of the vehicle.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising communicating the at least one of the points of interest to the occupant of the vehicle as a sequence of successive points of interest.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising communicating the successive points of interest in response to input received from the occupant of the vehicle.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising communicating the successive points of interest in response to movement of the vehicle.

10. A navigation system for use in a vehicle, the navigation system comprising:

- a global positioning system (GPS) receiver configured to determine a location of the vehicle;
- a data retrieval device configured to retrieve, from a data storage medium, navigation data representing a plurality of points of interest; and
- a processor-based subsystem operatively coupled to the GPS receiver and to the data retrieval device and configured to
 - determine a heading vector associated with the vehicle,
 - receive the navigation data from the data retrieval device,
 - select a point of interest from the plurality of points of interest as a function of the location of the vehicle and the heading vector associated with the vehicle,
 - communicate the point of interest to an occupant of the vehicle.

11. The navigation system of claim 10, further comprising a display device operatively coupled to the processor-based subsystem, wherein the processor-based subsystem is configured to cause the display device to display a graphic representation of the point of interest and a graphic representation of the vehicle.

12. The navigation system of claim 10, further comprising an audio output device operatively coupled to the processor-based system, wherein the processor-based subsystem is configured to cause the audio output device to generate an audible indicator of the point of interest.

13. The navigation system of claim 12, further comprising a speech module operatively coupled to the processor-based system and to the audio output device and configured to generate a speech indicator of the point of interest.

14. The navigation system of claim 10, wherein the processor-based system is further configured to determine the location of the vehicle comprises identifying a street on which the vehicle is located.

15. The navigation system of claim 14, wherein the point of interest is an intersection, and wherein the processor-based system is further configured to identify the intersection as a function of the location of the vehicle, the heading vector associated with the vehicle, and a list of intersections along the street.

16. The navigation system of claim 10, wherein the processor-based system is further configured to:
identify a plurality of points of interest as a function of the location of the vehicle and the heading vector associated with the vehicle; and
communicate at least one of the points of interest to the occupant of the vehicle.

17. The navigation system of claim 16, wherein the processor-based system is further configured to communicate the at least one of the points of interest to the occupant of the vehicle as a sequence of successive points of interest.

18. The navigation system of claim 17, further comprising an input device operatively coupled to the processor-based system and configured to receive input from the occupant, wherein the processor-based system is further configured to communicate the successive points of interest in response to input received from the occupant of the vehicle.

19. The navigation system of claim 18, wherein the input device comprises at least one of a keypad and an audio input device.

20. The navigation system of claim 17, wherein the processor-based system is further configured to communicate the successive points of interest in response to movement of the vehicle.

21. The navigation system of claim 10, wherein the data retrieval device comprises at least one of a memory device, an optical retrieval device, and a magnetic retrieval device.

22. A processor-readable medium containing processor-executable instructions that, when executed by a processor-based system in a vehicle, cause the processor-based system to:

- determine a location of the vehicle and a heading vector associated with the vehicle;
- identify a point of interest as a function of the location of the vehicle and the heading vector associated with the vehicle; and
- communicate the point of interest to the occupant of the vehicle.

23. The processor-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the processor-executable instructions cause the processor-based system to display a graphic representation of the point of interest and a graphic representation of the vehicle using a display device.

24. The processor-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the processor-executable instructions cause the processor-based system to generate an audible indicator of the point of interest using an audio device.

25. The processor-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the processor-executable instructions cause the processor-based system to identify a street on which the vehicle is located.

26. The processor-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the point of interest is an intersection, and wherein the processor-executable instructions cause the processor-based system to identify the intersection as a function of the location of the vehicle, the heading vector associated with the vehicle, and a list of intersections along the street.

27. The processor-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the processor-executable instructions cause the processor-based system to:
identify a plurality of points of interest as a function of the location of the vehicle and the heading vector associated with the vehicle; and
communicate at least one of the points of interest to the occupant of the vehicle.

28. The processor-readable medium of claim 27, wherein the processor-executable instructions cause the processor-based system to communicate the at least one of the points of interest to the occupant of the vehicle as a sequence of successive points of interest.

29. The processor-readable medium of claim 28, wherein the processor-executable instructions cause the processor-based system to communicate the successive points of interest in response to input received from the occupant of the vehicle.

30. The processor-readable medium of claim 28, wherein the processor-executable instructions cause the processor-based system to communicate the successive points of interest in response to movement of the vehicle.